

Brown, Levin Press Conference: Major Outstanding TPP Issues

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Comments of Ilana Solomon, Sierra Club, Director of the Responsible Trade Program

Thanks to Senator Brown and Congressman Levin for inviting the Sierra Club to join in this discussion and for your leadership on ensuring that trade is done right.

The Sierra Club has been working on making trade responsible and sustainable for over two decades. We're here today because based on the history of free trade deals and based on everything we know about the Trans-Pacific Partnership, we are deeply concerned that this pact would threaten our air, water, and climate.

Let's start with the TPP's environment chapter.

While the chapter will *touch on* a broad range of issues, including shark finning and illegal timber trade, the *obligations* themselves—what countries are *actually required* to do—are often very weak.

For example, rather than *prohibiting* commercial whaling and shark fin trade, both major issues in TPP countries, the TPP is likely to include vague language around the protection of marine mammals that might sound nice but stops far short of *requiring* countries to stop these harmful practices. We are concerned that TPP countries will not be required to prohibit illegal timber and wildlife trade, and that climate change will likely not even be *mentioned* in the chapter or the pact.

Second, we are concerned that whatever language is agreed to in the environment chapter will not be enforced. Despite *documented evidence* that some countries, like Peru, are not living up to their environmental obligations in free trade deals with the US, the USTR has never *once* brought an environmental trade dispute against another country. *Why should we believe they would start now?*

At the same time, any *potential* benefit of the environment chapter would be *overwhelmed* by the negative impacts of other parts of the pact. The TPP would vastly expand the investor-state dispute settlement system that corporations are increasingly using to *directly* challenge climate and clean energy policies, from a moratorium on fracking in Quebec, a nuclear phase-out in Germany, or an environmental review in Nova Scotia.

Also as a result of the TPP, the United States Department of Energy would be required to automatically approval all exports of natural gas to countries in the agreement, facilitating more dangerous fracking and more climate- disrupting emissions.

Unfortunately, the Hatch-Wyden-Ryan fast track bill not only does nothing to help address

any of our concerns about the TPP, but in fact would help lock in rules that would harm our air, water, and climate. The bill would limit Congressional oversight over trade at the moment in which it has never been more critical for Congress to maintain its leverage in the negotiations.

The bill contains guidelines for the office of the U.S. Trade Representative ostensibly to help shape the contents of trade deals like the TPP – but the guidelines are unenforceable and completely irrelevant.

For these and other reasons, the Sierra Club strongly opposes the Hatch-Wyden-Ryan bill, and we urge Members of Congress to join us in opposition.